

THE LIBERTON ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER — SUMMER 2026

News from the Association, early 2025 to summer 2026

Welcome to our latest newsletter, looking back over a busy eighteen months for the Association and for Liberton — from the biggest redevelopment proposal our area has seen in decades at Cameron Toll, to a hard-won breakthrough on the Alnwickhill Road pavement, and an intriguing proposal for a new woodland. As ever, none of it happens without our members, our committee and our volunteers: thank you all.

Planning and Development

Cameron Toll: a new neighbourhood takes shape

The most significant local story of the year is the proposed comprehensive redevelopment of Cameron Toll Shopping Centre. In November 2025 a Proposal of Application Notice was lodged on behalf of the centre's owners for a mixed-use scheme that could include retail, commercial space, housing, student accommodation, later-living accommodation, a hotel, offices, sports and leisure facilities, and improved public realm.

Public consultation events were held in the Central Mall on 15 December 2025 and 5 February 2026, attracting over 400 visitors. The masterplan envisages up to 500 new homes (around 175 of them affordable), a reconfigured centre retaining Sainsbury's as the anchor tenant, and a much-reduced car park — parking being the issue most frequently raised by local people. The developers describe their ambition as a genuine “20-minute neighbourhood” for the south-east of the city, with the site kept compatible with a future tram route and any reopening of the South Suburban Railway to passengers. The centre is to remain open and trading throughout any phased construction.

Your committee discussed the proposals in detail at our April meeting and is making contact with neighbouring community groups to explore a collective approach, so that the voices of all the communities affected are heard together rather than separately. Full details of the masterplan are at camerontollmasterplan.co.uk, and we will keep members informed as a formal planning application emerges.

The field at Alnwickhill Road and Liberton Drive

The Association continues to keep a close watch on the field at the corner of Alnwickhill Road and Liberton Drive. This spring, John Doohan undertook a careful study of the three title deeds covering the field, the strip of woodland and the bungalow at 68 Alnwickhill Road, tracing the land's ownership history back through the Gilmour family trust and successive disposals from the 1940s onwards. His report — for which the committee is very grateful — now gives us a much clearer picture of who owns what, and of the conditions attached to the land, and will inform the Association's response should any development proposal come forward.

Liberton Hospital site

After 119 years, Liberton Hospital closed its doors at the end of December 2025, with its remaining services relocated to Ellen's Glen. The City of Edinburgh Council has purchased the site and grounds from NHS Lothian for £14.8m and plans around 400 homes, a proportion of them accessible and for social or mid-market rent. The 1960s buildings are to be

demolished, with the original Edwardian buildings retained and redeveloped as part of a low-carbon neighbourhood. We will follow the master planning of this important site closely.

Braid Hills Nursing Home

Since the nursing home on Liberton Drive closed, its grounds have been sadly neglected, and last autumn residents opposite alerted us to a row of tall conifers behind the perimeter wall — most of them now dead — which pose a real danger to the road and pavement in high winds, along with overhanging shrubs that are a nuisance to pedestrians. The Association has been in dialogue with the site's new owners and with Council officers about getting the grounds made safe and tidied up. A planning application notice relating to the site was lodged in May 2026 by the new owners, Crown Care Ltd, a Newcastle-based care group who intend to demolish the current building and rebuild a new care home complex. Public consultation events will be held at the former nursing home on Liberton Drive on Wednesday 8 July and Wednesday 5 August 2026, from 3pm to 7pm on each occasion — we would encourage members to go along, see the proposals and have their say.

Northfield House

There has been a major change of direction at the former Northfield House Hotel site at 115 Lasswade Road. The new building on the site, constructed as student accommodation, was purchased by the City of Edinburgh Council, which obtained planning permission in January 2026 to change its use to temporary accommodation for 100 households experiencing homelessness; the large house on the grounds will also be converted into flats for the same purpose. The Council has stated that the site will be staffed 24 hours a day, year-round, with additional daytime support services, and that it will not be used to house asylum seekers, which is a Home Office matter.

Council officers and police took questions at a very well-attended meeting of Liberton & District Community Council on 27 April, where residents pressed them on community safety, GP capacity and the lack of consultation over the change of use — this will be the largest single temporary accommodation unit the Council has managed. Officers committed to returning to the Community Council three months after the unit opens to report on how things are going, and an open day was held at the site on 29 April. We will keep a close eye on how the scheme beds in.

Padel Courts application Braid Hills Golf Centre

A planning application has been submitted for 3 Padel courts to be erected to the left of the American Golf shop main building. Details of the application can be found by following the link.

<https://www.city-scope.co.uk/blog/braid-hills-golf-centre-padel-courts-liberton-drive-26-02521-ful>

A New Woodland for Liberton

One of the most exciting proposals to come before our community in many years arrived at New Year, when Andrew Gilmour, the recently appointed Trustee of the Craigmillar Trust (formerly the Liberton Trust, established in 1961), wrote to the Liberton and District Community Council. The Trust owns Craigmillar Castle and around 200 acres of farmland around Liberton Tower, and to mark the centenary of the birth of his father, Sir Ian Gilmour — later Lord Gilmour

of Craigmillar — Mr Gilmour proposed creating a new community woodland on Trust land: some 15,000 native broadleaf trees, planted purely for their ecological, recreational and educational value, with no commercial purpose.

The Liberton Association was among the groups consulted from the outset, and Dorothy Burns-Brown represented the Association at a preparatory meeting with Mr Gilmour and the Community Council in March. Community feedback at that early stage led to substantial revisions: the main woodland block between Blackford Glen Road and Braid Hills Drive was reduced from about 24 acres to about 16 (bringing the planting to around 12,000 trees), deer-proof fencing was adopted to protect the young trees from the local roe deer herd, the proposed play park and picnic area were shelved, and the scattered planting proposed across the wider estate — which had alarmed residents of Stanedykehead fearful for their magnificent views — was cut back to around forty individual trees.

The revised plans were presented at a well-attended public meeting on Monday 20 April 2026 at the Nucleus Building, King's Buildings, with around fifty residents in the hall and more online. Treeline Woodlands, the foresters, described it as one of the largest peri-urban woodland proposals in Edinburgh for 25 years — striking, given that Liberton's tree canopy cover of roughly 12% ranks among the very lowest in the city. The discussion was wide-ranging and candid, covering wildlife and the need for an ecological survey, the deer, antisocial behaviour, traffic on Blackford Glen Road, a Scottish Water main near Stanedykehead, footpath maintenance, equestrian access, and residents' insistence that the woodland must have no connection to any future housing development — which Mr Gilmour was clear it does not.

The intention is to begin planting in autumn 2026, subject to Scottish Forestry grant approval and further consultation, with schools and community volunteers invited to take part. The woodland would remain fenced while the trees establish, opening fully — with paths for walkers and riders — in the early 2030s. Nothing is finally decided, and comments are warmly invited via the Community Council or Davidson & Robertson, the Trust's land managers.

The Alnwickhill Road Pavement: A Breakthrough

Few issues have exercised the Association longer than the dreadful state of the footway on Alnwickhill Road. Because there is no pavement on the other side of the road, pedestrians have no choice but to use this stretch — yet its broken, eroded surface has caused falls and regularly forces those with prams and buggies into the road. The underlying difficulty has always been that the footway sits on private, unadopted land, leaving it in limbo between the landowner and the Council.

This spring, thanks in large part to Rodger Stirling's persistence on the committee's behalf, with the support of Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron, real progress was finally made. At its meeting on 1 May 2026 the Council's Transport Asset and Inventory group agreed in principle to a proposal from the Trustee of the Liberton and Craigmillar Trust to transfer ownership of the land on which the footway sits to the Council. The Council will require the Trustees to bring the path up to an adoptable standard before taking it over, and the legal details are now being worked through between the Trust's agents and the Council's lawyers. Encouragingly, by early June one section of the footpath had already been resurfaced. There is still some way to go, but after years of pressure a permanent solution is at last in sight.

Caring for Our Local Environment

Litter picking

Our programme of community litter picks has been on hold since January, but we are pleased to say it will resume in July. Watch the website and our Facebook page for dates — new

volunteers are always warmly welcome, and many hands make light work. Our thanks go to everyone who turned out for picks during 2025.

Graffiti removal

Volunteers have continued the campaign against graffiti in the area, with recent successful removals on Orchardhead Road and Liberton Drive in June 2026 — the before-and-after photographs on our X feed speak for themselves. If you spot graffiti locally, please report it via the Council helpline or let us know.

Fly tipping and bins

Litter bins have been disappearing from our streets: over recent months bins were removed from Ellens Glen Road, Howdenhall Road, Alnwickhill Grove and Mount Vernon Road, with the Council initially giving contradictory answers about whether they would return. After persistent chasing — much of it by the Community Council — all but one have now been replaced. The Mount Vernon Road bin remains missing, and we will continue to press for its return. If you notice a bin vanish near you, or spot fly tipping anywhere in the area, please report it via the Council helpline and let us know.

Mortonhall Community Park

Did you know there is a Community Park at the western edge of the Mortonhall Estate? Sadly, you might not — in May 2026 the Association highlighted its terrible state to the Council: overgrown grass, brambles everywhere, and effectively unusable by children and families. We have pressed the Council to explain why this public space has been allowed to deteriorate, and to restore it.

Liberton Brae culvert

The underground burn that passes in a culvert west of Liberton Brae blocked and overflowed again over the winter, pushing flood water onto adjacent properties. We have repeatedly raised this recurring problem with the Council and our elected representatives and will continue to do so until a lasting solution is found.

Night-time “lamping” in the fields

Last October, residents reported people “lamping” with dogs late at night in the field in front of Liberton Tower, entered from Alnwickhill Road. The incidents were reported to Police Scotland, who have asked for any details — particularly vehicle registrations — that residents can safely note. The farmer is supportive of warning signage, and the local Neighbourhood Watch is coordinating. If you witness lamping, please do not approach those involved; note what you safely can and report it to the police on 101.

Roads and Transport

Mayfield Road reopens — at last!

After more than two years, the closure of Mayfield Road at the Liberton Brae junction is finally over. The southern end of Mayfield Road has reopened in both directions, with some resurfacing carried out. The protracted student-accommodation works either side of the Braid Burn impeded this important route for an unacceptable length of time — a point we made forcefully alongside the Community Council.

Community Life

Annual General Meeting and an unforgettable talk

Our AGM was held on Saturday 18 October 2025 at 10.30am in the Anderson Hall. After the business of the meeting, we were delighted to welcome author Mary Monro as our guest speaker. Mary's book, "Stranger in My Heart", tells the remarkable story of her journey exploring her father's life — from the Battle of Hong Kong in 1941, to capture as a prisoner of war, his escape across China, his efforts to liberate the PoWs he had left behind, and finally the jungles of Burma in 1944. Her talk was warmly received, and our thanks go to everyone whose team effort made the morning run smoothly: setting up and clearing the hall, manning the door, running the presentations, and keeping the teas and coffees flowing.

Around 45 members attended, along with Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron. In the business of the meeting, the existing office bearers — President Alex Hammond-Chambers, Secretary Dorothy Burns-Brown and Treasurer Debbie Barclay — were re-elected for a further year, and David Lamb S.S.C. was re-appointed as Honorary Independent Examiner, with our thanks for his continued service. The Treasurer presented her report, the Constitution was approved, and the annual subscription was confirmed at £5 per person. If you have ideas for putting the Association's funds to good use, please contact any member of the committee.

The next Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday the 17th of October at 10.30 am at the Anderson Hall, Liberton Kirk.

Out and about

The Association was also represented at the Inch House community event on 29 November 2025, where our table gave us a chance to meet residents, answer questions and welcome new members.

Could Liberton have its own Summer Fete? John Doohan has been exploring the idea after visiting Kirkliston's impressive gala in June 2025 and raised it at our AGM. A summer fete would be a wonderful community occasion for Liberton in 2027— if you would like to help make it happen, please get in touch with John through the Association.

Community Hero Awards

Our MP Ian Murray's Community Hero Award continues to recognise local people who go the extra mile, with nominations coming from the public — often from those directly helped by the person nominated. We were delighted that a Liberton business, Pilates with Nicky Pender, was voted Edinburgh South Business Hero 2025, recognising Nicky's charitable fundraising and the community she has built. Congratulations!

Closer to home still, we are delighted that two of our own committee members have received Community Hero Awards: Rosy Carmichael — whose beautiful planting around the chemist's corner on Liberton Drive will be familiar to many — and David Cavanagh for his unstinting work with the LDCC and the Liberton Association. Warmest congratulations to them both.

Historic Liberton — video and booklet

Our video about the historic buildings of the Liberton area is now available to view on the website — around 25 minutes covering more than twenty buildings and places of historical and community significance. It complements our booklet, "Aboon the Kirk", which is also still available. Both are labours of love by Association members and well worth your time.

Association News

Your committee has met regularly throughout the period, generously hosted in members' homes, and the Association has kept its governance in good order, including a review of our insurance arrangements. Interest in the Association is growing, with a steady stream of membership enquiries arriving through the website.

Residents of the Liberton area are warmly invited to join. The annual subscription is £5 per person, due in October each year. You can join via the membership form on our website, or by emailing the secretary at liberton.association@gmail.com.

Keep in touch

Website: libertonassociation.co.uk • Facebook: [@LibertonAssoc](https://facebook.com/LibertonAssociation) • Email: liberton.association@gmail.com • X:

The Liberton Association — representing residents, improving our local environment and amenities, and making residents' concerns heard.